CLAIMS

1. A method of gathering information from short-range wireless portals, comprising the steps of:

(a) physically moving a mobile device within range of a short-range wireless portal;

(b) receiving information from the portal about the services available through the local entity operating the portal;

(c) sending a message containing that information to a remote database service system holding similar information from other portals; and

(d) storing the information at the database service system.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said message also contains the location of the portal, this location being stored with said information in the database service system whereby to permit location-based searching of the database system for entities providing specified types of service.

3. A method according to claim 2, wherein the location of the portal is provided to the mobile device by the portal itself.

4. A method according to claim 2, wherein the location of the portal is determined by the mobile device at the time of contact with the portal.

5. A method according to claim 1, wherein the message is passed to the mobile device to the database service system over a mobile cellular radio infrastructure.

6. A method according to claim 5, wherein upon receipt of said message the database service system obtains the location of the mobile device from a location server of the mobile radio infrastructure, this location being stored with said information in the database service system whereby to permit location-based searching of the database system for entities providing specified types of service.

7. A method according to claim 1, wherein said information is stored in the mobile device and the message containing this information is sent to the database service system at a later time by any appropriate means including by e-mail or by a web-based form sent over the internet.

8. A method according to claim 1, wherein the database service system acknowledges receipt of the message and this acknowledgement is transmitted back to the portal where an indicator is set, this indicator when set being used to prevent further messages being sent to the database service system by the same or similar mobile devices that subsequently obtain information from the portal.

9. A method according to claim 8, wherein the indicator is reset by the local entity operating the portal when there is a change in the information available from the portal.

10. A method according to claim 8, wherein the database service system has an associated identifier which is stored with said indicator and is used to restrict the action of preventing repeat message sends, to resends to the database service system indicated by said identifier.

11. A method according to claim 1, wherein the storing in the database service system of the information about the services available from the local entity associated with the portal, results in the user of the mobile device being recorded a reward.

12. A method according to claim 1, wherein said information includes the name or trading style of the local entity and contact information such as a telephone number, e-mail address or website URL.

13. A mobile device comprising:

- a short-range wireless receiver for receiving information from a short-range wireless portal about the services available through the local entity operating the portal;
- means for forming a message containing that information together with location data about the location of the portal; and

- a cellular radio subsystem for sending the message to a remote database service system over a mobile radio infrastructure.

14. A mobile device according to claim 13, further comprising means for receiving an acknowledgement back from the database service system and for passing this acknowledgment to the portal.